

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 495

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 17727

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: DFA UNDERSECRETARY COLLANTES BALANCE OF POWER REMARKS
IN SEOUL

1. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS DEC 18, DFA UNDERSECRETARY COLLANTES DELIVERED SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH AT KYUNG-HEE UNIVERSITY DEC 17 ON OCCASION OF RECEIVING HONORARY DEGREE AS PART OF 4-DAY VISIT TO SEOUL. DAILY EXPRESS VERSION STATES HE (A) STRESSED COMMON INTERESTS AND IDEALS OF PHILIPPINES AND SOUTH KOREA; (B) NOTED TWO COUNTRIES LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO FOREIGN PRESSURE AND LESS DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF SELF-RELIANT NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICIES AND STRENGTHENING ECONOMIES; (C) ATTRIBUTED INSTABILITY IN AREA TO DESIRE AND EFFORTS OF WORLD POWERS TO GAIN DOMINANCE OVER THE AREA. KOREAN AND INDOCHINESE WARS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE RESULT OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BETWEEN U.S., USSR AND PRC. LEADERS OF KOREA AND PHILIPPINES HAD CONSEQUENTLY PERCEIVED THAT SUFFICIENT BALANCE MUST BE MAINTAINED IN AREA SO NO ONE MAJOR POWER ABLE TO DOMINATE AREA. THIS EXPLANIS, COLLANTES REPORTEDLY SAID, THE ALLIANCES THAT EACH COUNTRY HAS FORMED AND DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS THEY HAVE MADE. (D) HE ALSO UNDERLINED VALUE OF EXPANDING SCOPE OF RELATIONS WITH REST OF WORLD "BECAUSE OLD RIGID
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ALLIANCES WILL NO LONGER DO TO ENSURE OUR SECURITY AND

WELL BEING." COLLANTES ALLEGEDLY CITED PHILIPPINE
"FLEXIBLE" FOREIGN POLICY AND SOUTH KOREA'S OPENING
DOORS TO ALL NATIONS, INCLUDING FORMER ADVERSARIES, AND
TAKING MODERATE STAND ON ISSUE OF REUNIFICATION WITH
COMMUNIST NORTH KOREA.

2. DFA SECRETARY ROMULO TOLD ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DEC 18
THAT HE HAD ASKED COLLANTES TO GIVE BALANCE OF POWER
SPEECH IN SEOUL. INTENT, HE SAID, WAS TO INDICATE IM-
PORTANCE PHILIPPINES ATTACHED TO U.S. STAYING IN ASIA.

3. COMMENT: COLLANTES ENDORSEMENT OF SELF-RELIANCE AND
FLEXIBLE FOREIGN POLICY IS STANDARD NEW SOCIETY LINE.
WHEN COUPLED WITH ENDORSEMENT OF CONTINUED DEFENSE ARRANGE-
MENTS THAT BOTH PHILIPPINES AND KOREA HAVE WITH U.S., IT
CAN ALSO BE CONSTRUED AS LINE ROMULO SAID HE ASKED
COLLANTES TO TAKE.

4. REFERENCES TO FLEXIBILITY AND TO SOUTH KOREA'S OPEN-
NESS TO RELATIONS WITH FORMER ADVERSARIES PROBABLY ALSO
INTENDED TO SIGNAL GOP'S INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING LINK
WITH NORTH KOREA. GOP BACKED OFF FROM THIS GAMBIT LAST
YEAR BUT LOGIC OF IT TO PHILIPPINES STRENGTHENS AS RELA-
TIONS WITH PRC ESTABLISHED AND ARE IMMINENT WITH USSR,
AND AS PHILIPPINES PURSUES ITS OPENING TOWARDS THIRD
WORLD. SULLIVAN

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